

**VSHP**

Volunteer State Health Plan

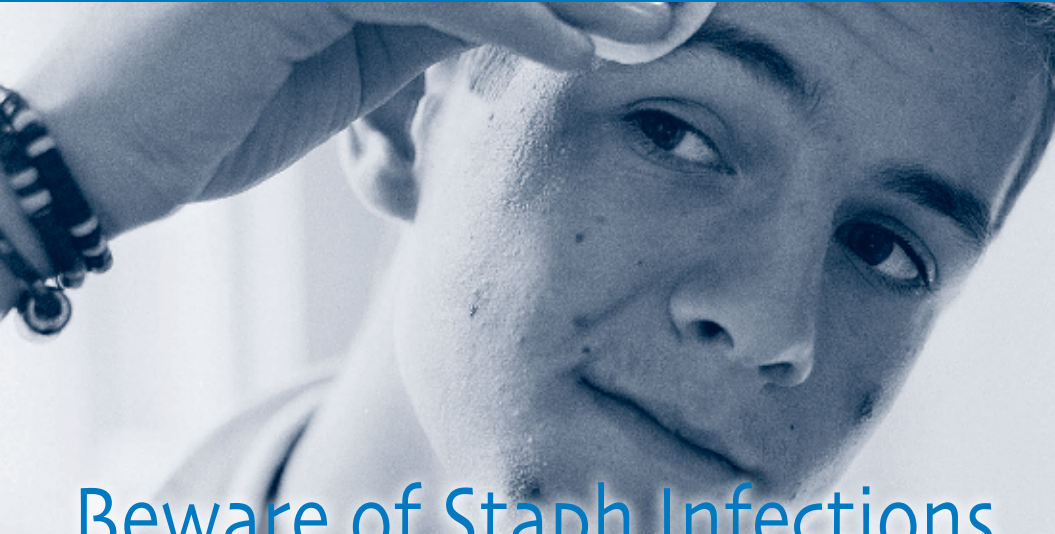
Just for You

For BlueCare and TennCareSelect members under age 21

BlueCare®
TennCareSelect**TENNder CARE**
✓ Check In ✓ Check Up ✓ Check Back
TENNESSEE'S EPSDT PROGRAM

Para información acerca de
TennCare in español,
llame al 1-866-311-4290.

1st Quarter 2008



Beware of Staph Infections

As a teen, you know that pimples and zits can be common. But beware of skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils. They are often red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. They may be caused by a type of bacteria called *Staphylococcus* (staf-uh-low-**kah**-kus), or Staph for a shorter name.

Several types of staph bacteria exist. Staph bacteria live in the nose and on skin surfaces of healthy people. But when the skin is broken, staph bacteria can enter the wound and cause an infection. Most of these skin infections are minor and can be treated without antibiotics.

However, a Staph infection that is showing up in schools can become serious because it is resistant to many antibiotics. If the infection enters the blood stream, it can cause serious health problems, even death in some cases.

Schools have many elements that make spreading of the infection possible. In some cases, schools

have even closed to be cleaned and disinfected because of the widespread infection. Factors of spreading include:

- Crowding – skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a Staph infection
- Frequent contact, such as in sports
- Open wounds
- Sharing of infected items

Protect Yourself

- Keep clean. Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Shower or bathe daily.
- Cover cuts and scrapes with a clean dry bandage until healed.
- Do not share personal items. Avoid sharing towels, razors or clothing that has come into contact with your bare skin. Use clothing or a towel between your skin and shared equipment such as weight-training benches. Disinfect sports equipment after each use.
- Keep surfaces clean that often come in contact with your skin.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Myth: Poor hygiene can cause acne.

Fact: Acne is not caused by dirt or surface oil. Washing your face too often or too vigorously can cause your skin to dry out and become irritated. It is only necessary to wash your skin twice a day with a gentle soap.

Free Services

As a BlueCare or TennCareSelect member, you can get the following free services:

- information on FREE interpretation and translation services
- TENNderCare information in an audio or Braille format
- a ride* (if you need one) to your doctor or health department

Just call:

- **1-800-468-9698** if you are a BlueCare member
- **1-800-263-5479** if you are a TennCareSelect member

*If you are in foster care and need a ride to your doctor, call **1-866-311-4287**.

Straight Talk Just for Girls

“My periods are not regular. What’s wrong with me?” If this is your situation, there are some things you need to know.

Many girls have very irregular periods during the first couple years of menstruating. In fact, irregular is regular for many girls. Menstruating or a period happens when all parts of a girl’s reproductive system have matured and are working together.

The levels of your hormones determine the amount of blood and how long your period lasts. Since you are still growing in your teen years, your hormone levels are constantly changing. This can account for your period being different from one to the next.

In addition, young women don’t always ovulate every month when they first get their periods. There’s no sure way for a girl to know which month she is ovulating and which she is not. You should assume you can get pregnant each and every month, even if your periods are irregular.

A girl’s first period can happen anytime from about age 10 to age 16. Just as the onset of your period can vary, so can the length and the number of days between cycles. A cycle is the number of days from the start of one period to the start of the next. Menstrual cycles can be anywhere between 21 and 45 days for the first couple of years. The cycle usually shortens to 21 to 34 days. The amount of time that you may have your period can vary from two or three days to seven days or longer.

Other things can also cause irregular periods or make your periods stop.

They include:

- Too much exercise
- Eating disorders
- Poor nutrition
- Heavy stress

If you are sexually active and skip a period, you should still see a doctor to see if you are pregnant. Remember, if you are a BlueCare or TennCareSelect member under age 21, visits to your primary care provider (PCP) are free under the TENNderCare Program.

Sources: National Institute of Child Health & Human Development and the Food and Drug Administration



How is an annual checkup different from a checkup when I’m sick?

Instead of just focusing on a sore throat or sprained ankle, the doctor looks at your whole medical history and combines that information with what he or she learns from your checkup. Your doctor will give you shots or prescriptions that you may need and fill you in on diseases for which you may be at risk. The following things will be done at the visit:

- Health history
- Complete physical exam
- Lab tests as needed
- Shots as needed
- Vision/hearing screening
- Developmental/behavioral screening as appropriate
- Advice on how to keep healthy



Straight Talk Just for Guys

Let's face it. Everyone wants to be a winner. And what guy wouldn't want to look "ripped" or have the body that girls admire? But if you're not careful, you could sacrifice your good health for temporary glory.

Consider this. You probably think that sports supplements are safe to use and good for you because they're sold at gyms and health food stores. You might be right. But you might be wrong.

The dangers of sports supplements stem from the fact that little is known about them and their side effects on the body. Because the sports supplement industry is largely unregulated, there's no way to know what or how pure the ingredients are. Side effects of sports supplements include:

- Allergic reactions
- Stomach cramps
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Weight gain
- Water retention

What about performance-enhancing drugs or PEDs, such as steroids and growth hormones? If you use PEDs to get an edge, you're not only cheating; you're playing a losing game. In addition to severe acne, PEDs can cause serious health problems – even death. You won't care how fast or strong you are if you have to deal with some of these problems:

- Baldness
- Muscle cramps and muscle strain
- Sleep problems
- Heat stroke
- Severe mood swings and depression
- Seizures
- Irregular heart beat
- Heart attack
- Stroke and blood clots
- Abnormal kidney function
- Liver damage
- Cancers

The only way to be sure any supplements are safe is to check with a doctor, nutritionist, or other medical professional. Remember, if you are a BlueCare or TennCareSelect member under age 21, visits to your primary care provider (PCP) are free under the TENNderCare Program.



Check It Out

Have a question about:

- Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)?
- Tattoos and body piercings?
- Relationships?
- Depression?

Get answers on these and other topics on our Web site just for teens:

www.TeenHealthExplosion.com

Get a well-care TENNderCare checkup every year

The checkup is free for BlueCare and TennCareSelect members through age 20.

Be sure when you schedule your checkup that you ask for a TENNderCare checkup. It's like a checkup for every part of your body, even hearing and vision. It is more than a sports physical.





of Tennessee



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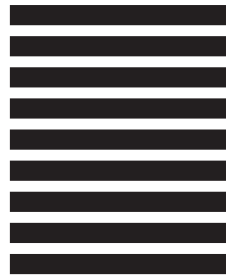
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Checkup and check out chance to win Wal-Mart card

Get a checkup and get a chance to win a \$100 Wal-Mart gift card. If you are a BlueCare or TennCareSelect member, and get your annual well-care checkup by

May, 2008, we'll put your name in for a drawing. Six lucky winners will be drawn. Let us know when you've had your checkup by filling out the

card below and returning it to us. Just drop it in the mail. You do not need a stamp. Best of luck! And best of health!

Cut this page out of the newsletter. Fold into thirds with the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee address on the outside. Tape shut. Drop in mailbox.

Your address:

Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

I received my yearly well-care checkup on _____ (date)

At _____ (where)

By _____ (name of doctor or nurse)

BlueCare or TennCareSelect Member Name _____

Member's ID Number (look on your health care ID card) _____

Energy Drinks – Good or Bad?



You may not need to spend money on energy drinks to get the energy you need. In fact, some so-called energy drinks may do more harm than good. That's because caffeine is one of the main ingredient in many energy drinks.

Caffeine is a stimulant. It can increase reaction time and alertness.

But, it can also increase blood pressure and heart rate. This could be bad for people with risk factors for heart disease. Caffeine can cause nervousness, upset stomach, headaches and sleep problems. These side effects can seem even worse if you are taking certain medicines.

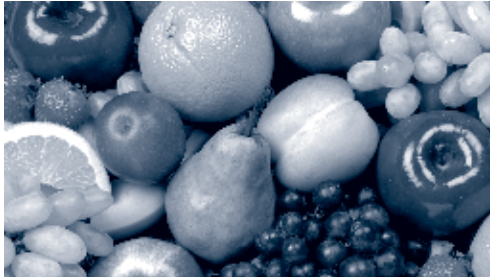
Besides caffeine and sugar, some

brands of energy drinks may have ingredients that have not been tested for safety.

Your best bet for getting energy is the natural way:

- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Drink plenty of water
- Exercise regularly
- Get plenty of sleep

Sweets Are No Treat for Teeth



Do sweet treats affect your teeth? YES, food or drinks with a lot of sugar may give you cavities. The bacteria (germs) in your mouth love sugars found in many foods and drinks. The bacteria feed on the sugars producing acids that hurt the enamel or hard surface of your teeth. If you eat or drink a lot of sugar, and don't brush your teeth afterwards, more damage and cavities can occur.

It is important to choose food and drinks wisely, and think before you eat.

Here are some tips that will help:

- Eat a healthy diet of fruit, vegetables, meat, bread and milk.
- Choose healthy snacks that are low in sugar such as apples, carrot sticks, yogurt or low fat cheese.
- Drink lots of water.
- Don't drink soft drinks. They contain a lot of sugar. A can of regular soda has 10 teaspoons of sugar.
- Brush your teeth thoroughly after food or drink that contains sugar. Remember the longer the sugar sits on your teeth, the more damage it can cause!

- Brush thoroughly two times each day with fluoride toothpaste and floss one time each day.
- Visit your dentist regularly for checkups and cleanings.

Dentists have known for a long time that having a healthy mouth helps you have a healthy body. To stay healthy, you should see your dentist every six months, and brush and floss your teeth daily.

If you have TennCare you have TENNderCare (EPSDT) dental services until you become 21 years old. These services include FREE regular 6-month checkups, fluoride treatments and sealants.

If you have TennCare, call Doral Customer Service at **1-888-233-5935**, or visit the Web site at www.doralusa.com

- For help finding a dentist.
- For questions about your TennCare dental benefits.
- For help with interpretation and translation.
- For help with transportation.

Volunteer State Health Plan, Inc. (VSHP), BlueCare BlueShield of Tennessee, Inc. (BCBST) and BlueCare are independent licensees of the BlueCross BlueShield Association. VSHP is a licensed HMO affiliate of BCBST.

No one is treated in a different way because of race, color, birthplace, language, sex, age, religion or disability. Do you think you've been treated unfairly? Do you have more questions? Do you need more help? You can make a free call to the Family Assistance Service Center at 1-866-311-4287. In Nashville, call 743-2000.

This document is classified as public information

For information about interpretation and translation services that are free to the enrollee, BlueCare members call 1-800-468-9698. TennCareSelect members call 1-800-263-5479.

Manage Your Health Now To Take Control of Your Future

As a teen, you have the opportunity to take control of your health by making healthy choices without being asked or reminded by someone. Here are some things to consider:

- If you take any medicines, take them without being reminded by someone.
- Take any prescriptions exactly as directed by your doctor.
- Become more involved in your doctor visits.
- During a doctor visit, talk for yourself about your health care needs. Write down any questions you may have. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask the doctor anything. The doctor's job is to help you understand your health.
- If you are 15 to 17 years old and have been going to a doctor for children, it may be time to talk to your doctor about making the switch to a doctor for adults.
- By the time you are 18 years old, you should be the one to call your doctor's office to set up a time for your checkup.



I'm not sick – why do I need to go to the doctor?

Sometimes symptoms aren't big or noticeable. Plus, a lot of diseases can be prevented. Many diseases affect teens, but especially in the Tennessee area there have been high rates of teenage diabetes, obesity and heart problems. That's why you should go for a checkup so that problems can be caught early before they get too serious.